

What the Republicans have done with the Patients' Bill of Rights, they have attached provisions which they claim are going to address the problems of the uninsured but do not effectively do so. They have attached provisions that would expand MSA, medical savings accounts.

Medical savings accounts are a device whereby, under Medicare, for example, rather than buy an HMO or traditional fee-for-service policy, they could buy a policy whereby they get a lump sum; and if they do not use a certain amount of their care over the course of the year, that money is paid back to them in a check that they can use to go on a vacation or to buy a car, whatever they want to do.

Basically what it does is to create a situation where they are kind of gambling with their health, if you will. They assume that they will not have certain expenses; and they, basically, establish a threshold, if you will, for the level of care that if they do not meet they pay out of pocket up to that certain threshold. And it has not worked.

I mean, basically, very few Americans have signed up for medical savings accounts. And the whole idea is, essentially, something that very few seniors or anybody is responding to. But the Republican leadership says, oh, this is a great idea. This is a great way of expanding health insurance. Well, I do not see how it accomplishes that at all.

They also have HealthMarts and they have other devices that supposedly are going to make it possible for more people to have health insurance but, in fact, do not accomplish that at all.

What I see happening here, without getting into the details of it, is, rather than addressing the Patients' Bill of Rights and trying to come to a consensus on the HMO reform that the majority of the people in the majority of this Congress have supported, they now are trying to muck up this whole issue by talking about these access issues for which there is no consensus and which will simply delay any action on the Patients' Bill of Rights and on HMO reform in this Congress.

And so, what I have said to my colleagues, and I will say again, Mr. Speaker, is let us pass a good Patients' Bill of Rights; let us deal with the HMO reform issue, which is now ripe, which overwhelmingly the people and the Members of Congress have voted for in this House and support; let us go with the House version; let us send this to the President, because he says that he will sign it; and let us make this the first priority to show that that Congress can accomplish something that is important to the American people on a bipartisan basis.

I know that I, as a Democrat, and my colleagues on the Democratic side, including those of us who are conferees, will continue to insist on that, insist

that the conference meets, that we come up with a strong Patients' Bill of Rights similar to the House version, and that we get it to the President so that we can have a great accomplishment and a great victory for the American people. And we will be back here many times in the evening demanding that that happen. Because the Republicans are in the majority and they control the process, and it is up to them to make sure that this happens, with bipartisan support from the Democrats.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DEFazio (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today and the balance of the week on account of illness.

Mr. STUPAK (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of medical reasons.

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of official business.

Ms. CARSON (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of official business.

Mr. BAIRD (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of an unavoidable family matter.

Mrs. CAPPs (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of a death in the family.

Mr. SCHAFER (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of official business.

Mr. SAXTON (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of illness in the family.

Mr. CALLAHAN (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

Mr. KASICH (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of personal reasons.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BISHOP, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BARCIA, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. METCALF) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WOLF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELLER, for 5 minutes, February 16.

Mr. HUTCHINSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MORELLA, for 5 minutes, February 15.

Mr. HANSEN, for 5 minutes, February 15.

Mr. MCINNIS, for 5 minutes, February 15.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Administration, reported that that committee had examined and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 764. An act to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1451. An act to establish the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 632. An act to provide assistance for poison prevention and to stabilize the funding of regional poison control centers.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 38 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Tuesday, February 15, 2000, at 9:30 a.m., for morning hour debates.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6150. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Horses From Qatar; Change in Disease Status [Docket No. 97-131-3] received January 3, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6151. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Mepiquat Chloride; Pesticide Tolerance [FRL-6485-4] received January 3, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6152. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Maneb; Extension of Tolerance for Emergency Exemptions [OPP-300954; FRL-6394-9] (RIN: 2070-AB78) received January 5, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

6153. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting the request and availability of appropriations for the Department of Health and Human Services' Low Income Energy Assistance Program; (H. Doc. No. 106-196); to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.